



VENTNOR TOWN COUNCIL

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

FURTHER INFORMATION

1) INTRODUCTION

- a) The initial project proposal was based on the encouragingly wide criteria for applications to the Economic Improvement Fund set out in the Council Leader's letter of 5 December that launched it.
- b) This recognised that *Town and parish councils are well placed to have a good understanding of what possible initiatives in their respective areas could contribute to economic wellbeing and are likely to have an informed understanding of what will contribute to economic prosperity in [their] local areas.*
- c) Ventnor Town Council, in responding positively to the opportunity this represented, also recognised the need to comply with the stated criteria; these we understood from the Leader's letter to be:
 - the key qualification of match funding by the Town Council of the, in our case, £12,477 on offer;
 - proposed projects must contribute to the economic wellbeing/improvement of parish areas;
 - proposed projects must not be directly contrary to existing IW Council policies and objectives;
 - proposed projects should wherever possible have the support of their local IW Council members at the stage of submission.
- d) Ventnor Town Council believes that its submission complies with all these criteria: match funding is provided for in its 2012/13 Budget as formally adopted at its meeting of 20 February 2012; the proposal will contribute to economic wellbeing as defined by the Commission for Rural Communities¹; it has a good fit with existing IW Council policies around *Regeneration and the Economy*²; and it has been signed off by both the town's local IW Council members.
- e) However, the Town Council welcomes the invitation to provide further supporting detail as requested by the Panel on 21 February.
- f) This is provided in the following two sections of this document, the first identifies the origins of the proposal developed; the second takes the outcomes listed in section 10 of the submitted proposal to the next level of detail.

2) ORIGINS

- a) The project proposal has grown from two linked sets of roots: the Town Council's response to the recently published data on the extent of the Town's deprivation and the consequent consultations with 85 representatives of the town's 65 voluntary and community organisations.

¹ CRC, *Understanding Economic Wellbeing*. January 2010

² Isle of Wight Council's Corporate Plan 2011-13

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- b) The deprivation data revealed in the English Indices of Deprivation 2010 published in March 2011 and the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2011 published in October is referred to in the project proposal: additional detail is provided in Appendix A to this document.
 - c) A direct consequence of that data, after a detailed discussion of its significance at an informal meeting, was a unanimous formal commitment to a Community Engagement Strategy starting with a series of four meetings on successive Mondays between 16 January and 4 February.
 - d) The first two took the form of breakfast meetings. On 16 January the Town Council and Clerks met with 20 senior staff from the range of professional agencies active in the town, including two from the Isle of Wight Council: the networking proved effective all round and positive outcomes, including co-ordinated work with Job Centre Plus and a £5,000 contribution from Southern Housing Group, have already come directly from it and discussions of others are continuing.
 - e) That was followed a week later by a meeting with senior officers of the five national organisations with local economic outlets: Co-operative, Tesco, HSBC, Boots and Lloyds.
 - f) On the following two Monday evenings, Town Councillors and Clerks met with representatives of the town's third sector organisations in response to invitations to all 65 we have identified: 36 individuals attended the first and 49 the second. Following a presentation of the deprivation data, participants took part in table-based groups and, individually, completed a total of 170 post-it note responses.
 - g) This project has clear links to 30% (49) of those responses: an important fact in the Town Council's formal decision to identify the match funding for it.

3) DETAILED OUTCOMES

- a) The Panel will recognise that project proposals cannot predict all outcomes from the activity they make possible.
- b) It is, though, good discipline to clarify them as much as possible, as requested, at the formative stage. Appendix B to this document does this by identifying the links between the project's Purposes as set out in section 1 of the project proposal, the identified Outcomes in its section 10 and the next level of detail.

4) CONCLUSION

- a) As the Project title identifies, this is about crucial development processes rather than physical infrastructure or quick solutions.
- b) That is because Ventnor Town Council is very clear indeed that given the challenges the town faces – deprivation among the worst on the Island, geographical isolation, limited and expensive transport – effective responses require factual information, community inclusion and engagement, careful, thorough planning and preparation and sensitive building of sustainable supporting organisational structures.
- c) The Town Council is equally clear that the town has many strengths: the creativity of many of its residents, the varied, lively and extensive third sector, its very special geology and biodiversity and the soon to come on stream new Winter Gardens and revitalised Botanic Gardens.

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- d) We firmly believe that this project will both lay the foundations of and provide the co-ordination for very positive developments in the town's economic life. Consequently, we very much hope that the Isle of Wight Council will continue to make the delivery of the project possible.

Deprivation in Ventnor

- 1) It has taken the evidence of the *English Indices of Deprivation 2010* (published March 2011) and the *Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2011* (published October 2011) to establish the fact that Ventnor's central area is in the most deprived 20% nationally and among the five most deprived on the Island.
- 2) The JSNA states it clearly: *Five of the Island's 89 LSOAs are among the most deprived 20% in England: they are in Newport, Ryde and Ventnor (page 9).*
- 3) The Ventnor area identified here is Lower Super Output Area (LSOA) Isle of Wight 018A. It is the 4th most deprived of the 89 on the Island, coming behind only Ryde North East, St John's West and Pan as ranked by IMD 2010 overall scores. All other areas within the Key Regeneration Areas of the Core Strategy are less deprived.
- 4) Within the individual domains of the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2010, this area of Ventnor is the second most deprived on the Island on both Health and Employment, worse off than only Sandown North for Health and Ryde North East for Employment.
- 5) The Lowtherville area of Ventnor (IoW LSOA 018C) is well within the 30% most deprived nationally, coming 5th within the Island's 89 LSOAs, behind only St John's West, Pan, Osborne and Sandown South on the children living in income deprived homes domain and 4th behind only two Pan areas and St John's West in relation to Education and Skills.
- 6) This table identifies some of the aspects of absolute deprivation within these two areas:

Area	% in		
	Income Deprivation	Employment Deprivation	Children in income deprived families
Central	25	20	33
Lowtherville	24	14	36

- 7) The next table identifies the relative positions of these two areas within the Island's 89 LSOAs on both the IMD 2010's overall rankings and the most relevant domain scores. The third column identifies the only Island LSOAs ranked as more deprived than the more deprived Ventnor one.

	Central	Lowtherville	More deprived
Overall score	4 th	17 th	Ryde NE, St Johns W, Pan
Income	6 th	8 th	St Johns W, Pan, Newport N, Ryde NE. Sandown S
Employment	2 nd	22 nd	Ryde NE
Health	2 nd	29 th	Sandown N
Education & Skills	20 th	4 th	Pan, Pan, St Johns W
Children in poverty	10 th	5 th	St Johns W, Osborne, Pan, Sandown S

PURPOSES	OUTCOMES	DETAIL
To collate all data relevant to the local economy, town centre trading and tourism services and develop a set of indicators for each area that will track trends over time.	a routine collection and collation regime for locally relevant data across the critical areas of employment, business, town centre development and tourism	The last time Ventnor had anything approaching adequate data was through the Market Towns Initiative Health Check of 2002. The task here is to update that data structure, agreeing and implementing any extensions of enhancement of it in the process. Clearly, relevant, accurate and contemporary data is a prerequisite of effective planning [Completion milestone: 30 June]*
	baseline statistics for each data category	The project will source the current detailed data for each of the three areas covered in the Project Proposal: employment, trading and tourism, providing baseline clarity that is presently seriously lacking [Completion milestone 30 June]
	an agreed set of indicators supported by the data regime enabling trend monitoring	Ventnor has no reliable trend data for the three areas. The Project will agree the most useful indicators with the key players in each of the three areas and establish the routines for the collection and communication of the data that feeds them [Completion milestone 30 September]
To increase employment opportunities within the town for both young people and adults.	engagement with the Isle of Wight Council's apprenticeship programme resulting in the placement of three new posts in the town	The project will link with the IW Council's apprenticeship programme either directly or through its major contractors and with local businesses and traders to identify at least three potential placements within that programme [Completion milestone 30 September]
	the creation of at least 10 new jobs within the areas of the town's economy identified above	The project will increasingly engage with local businesses and traders to identify potential for new employment with a target of 10 new posts arising from that activity by the end of the project year [Completion milestone 31 March 2013]
To facilitate and support the engagement of all key players and stakeholders in each of those areas in working with each other and the town council to stimulate sustained through sustainable and effective umbrella organisations.	identification of ownership of town centre properties and opening discussions with them	The town centre is clearly critical for the town's future, for residents present and future and to support its tourism industry. The owners of its properties could contribute very significantly to its necessary enhancement; this project will identify at least a majority of them and initiate, along with Town Councillors, discussions with them [Completion milestone 30 September]
	sustainable sponsor and support structures for the local economy including business development, town centre improvement and tourism support	The town needs an active, inclusive and effective Business Association or equivalent; it doesn't have one. It needs a matching organisation for its hotels, B&B and other providers of tourism services; it doesn't have one. It almost certainly needs an overarching economic development organisation of the key economic players; it doesn't have one. This project will initiate the connections, conversations and discussions that will lead to the establishment of effective, ongoing organisational structures for all three, with administrative support provided as necessary to their sustainability [Completion milestone 31 January 2013]
To act as a catalyst for shared agreement on and commitment to a Marketing Strategy reflecting the town's unique character and capable of confirmation in the visitor experience.	a marketing strategy developed with and shared by local stakeholders	The need for a marketing strategy is widely recognised in the Town. However, to be effective it must grow out of, not be imposed on, the town's life. This project will organise and lead the wide-ranging discussions required to achieve that end and secure advisory input from people expert in this area leading to an agreed and adopted Marketing Strategy [Completion milestone 31 January 2013]
	a professionally developed rebranding for the Town and related corporate identity manual.	Feeding the strategy through into professional developed branding and corporate identity in collaboration with local stakeholders is an attractive outcome but dependent on access to additional funding [Completion milestone 31 March 2013]

- Completion milestone dates assume an early April project commencement